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the facts were vouched for; nearly fifty authorities would be found cited.

A communication was then made, contributed by Lieut. EARDLEY WILMOT, "On the Hair of the Hovas of Madagascar," accompanied with specimens; and Dr. Beigel read a report of a microscopic examination which he had made of the hair.

The meeting adjourned, after a short discussion, till the 18th inst.

MAY 18TH, 1869.

L. OWEN PIKE, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

THE Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The following list of presents was announced, and thanks were voted to the donors.

FOR THE LIBRARY.

From J. W. JACKSON, Esq.—The Argument, *à priori*, for the Moral Attributes of God (two copies). The necessary Existence of God (two copies), W. H. Gillespie.

From J. FRASER, Esq.—Gathering from Grave Yards, by A. Walker. The Narrative of Captain David Woodard.

From Dr. DELGADO JUGO.—Discursos leídos en la Sesión inaugural de la Sociedad Antropológica Española, 21 Feb., 1869, Don Francisco F. Gonzalez and Dr. Delgado Jugo.

From Dr. JAMES HUNT.—M. Edouard Fillhol, Dr. F. Garrigou. De la Femme dans l'état social de son Travail et de sa Remuneration; M. B. de Perthes; Congrès Medical International de Paris. Köhlerglaube und Wissenschaft, Dr. Carl Vogt. Natur Wissenschaft und Bibel, A. Wagner.

From the SOCIETY.—Reports of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries.

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Royal Society.

The CHAIRMAN directed attention to the skeleton of a gorilla which was standing on the table. He said it had been presented to the Society by T. Craston, Esq., and had been contributed and set up by private subscription among the Fellows, as such an object was not considered to be strictly one to which the general funds of the Anthropological Society could be appropriated. It was pronounced to be one of the most perfect skeletons in this country.

The following paper, contributed by Mr. HODDER M. WESTROPP, was then read.

*On the Mythic Age.*

There is no greater evidence of the intellectual unity of the human race, than the similar and almost identical myths evolved in different and remote countries. The human mind pursues the same path among all races in its struggle to emerge from darkness into the light of civilisation. The same phases of mind follow in orderly sequence. One of the most remarkable of these phases is the evolution of the mythic period in the progressive development of nations, correspond-

ing to the youth or imaginative or fable-loving age of the individual man.

The various myths, legends, fables and other products of the imaginative phase of man's mind in different countries, presenting a marked analogy, prove the spontaneous tendencies of human thought and imagination are similar in all countries, at a certain stage of their progress. They are phenomena of the human mind, developing themselves in accordance with laws peculiar to the mind of man in the youthful stage of his development. They are rude attempts in an uncivilised and unphilosophical age to solve the unintelligible phenomena of nature, those ever recurring phenomena suggesting like and analogous ideas to all races. As all the manifestations of nature are connected with each other by the common principle of being, and as all exercise of reason must give birth to somewhat similar results, so also the mythic offspring of the mind must bear a kindred relationship and likeness to each other. The uniformity of the operations of mind and instinct among all races will necessarily produce these similarities.

In the life of every nation or community left to its own natural career, there is *necessarily* a primitive mythic or mythopœic age during which all men express themselves by means of concrete fictions, created according to their momentary impulses; and these fictions aggregating themselves, are formed by degrees into a mass of mythical substance; in the life of the individual man also, there is invariably a youthful period, in which the tone of fiction and the poetic and imaginative elements predominate. It can be shown that in every nation, as in each individual, the same stage has been gone through, each passing through the same phase and subsequently advancing out of it, for every evolution or phenomenon of the human mind has its allotted period in the sequence of the stages of its development.

As Dr. Draper remarks, "There is a progress for races of men as well marked as the progress of one man. There are thoughts and actions appertaining to specific periods in the one case as in the other. Without difficulty we affirm of a given act that it appertains to a given period. We recognise the noisy sports of boyhood, the business application of maturity, the feeble garrulity of old age. We express our surprise when we witness actions unsuitable to the epoch of life. As it is in this respect in the individual so it is in the nation. The march of individual existence shadows forth the march of race existence, being, indeed, its representative on a little scale." The mythic period is thus the invariable and necessary evolution of the youthful phase of man's development, as well in the individual as in the aggregate.

Man being endowed in all races with the same instincts, capacities and faculties, works out similar conceptions and ideas, according to the stage of his development, for the mode of action of human organisation is uniform in all climes. In the early stage, like the child, he extends his personality to all he sees, he transfers his human attributes, his feelings, passions, vitality to all external and material things, he invests the trees, the winds, the rocks, the rivers with consciousness and will, he seeks to bring all nature into harmony with his human

nature, he attributes life and intelligence to all parts of creation, he identifies the elements, the stars with superior beings; he thus receives impressions which produce analogous ideas and feelings in different countries, which he embodies, gives a concrete shape to and combines in the form of a fiction. Prichard (*History of Man*, p. 505) confirms this view in the following passage, "So many curious traits occur in the description of this infernal goddess and her abode, which recall the Proserpine of classical mythology, and the Pattala of the Hindoos, and the subterranean scenes of enchantment among the Arabs, that we might well be inclined to derive these fables from a common source, if the resemblance between them was not better accounted for by referring it to the common laws of the human mind, and to the tendency of the imagination to create similar fictions with reference to particular subjects, and under the influence of corresponding feelings and impressions. But this brings out so much the stronger the proof that the mind is the same in different countries and in different races of men." The vivifying sun becomes a beneficent and all-powerful being; the all-producing earth, a bounteous and kind mother: night, darkness, the storm, the thunder cloud, and lightning, being injurious to him, he conceives as adverse and antagonistic beings. The sun, which animates all nature, which causes the seasons, which bestows on the earth that active heat, the cause of all productiveness, becomes thus the hero of many a tale and myth.

"To that tendency for personification," we again quote Dr. Draper, "which marks the early life of man, are due many of the mythological conceptions. It was thus the hours, the dawn, and night, with her black mantle bespangled with stars, received their forms. Many of the most beautiful legends were thus of a personified astronomical origin, many were derived from physical nature. The clouds were thus made to be animated things; a moving spirit was given to the storm, the dew, the wind. The sun setting in the glowing clouds of the west becomes Hercules in the fiery pile; the morning dawn extinguished by the rising sun, is embodied in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. These legends still survive in India." To this origin we may attribute the numerous myths of the sun under the name of Ra, Surya, Helios, Mithra, Adonis, Apollo, Odin.

The personification and worship of the physical sun under the name of Ra, appears to have been universal in Egypt. He was usually represented as a man with a hawk's head surmounted by a globe or disk of the sun. The form of a hawk was given to him when he set behind the western mountains of Thebes, and was received into the arms of Athor, who presided over that part of the universe and represented night.

The Indian makes Surya the personification of the sun. He is pictured of a deep golden complexion with his head encircled by golden rays of glory. He has sometimes four, and at others two, arms; holding a lotus in one of his hands and sometimes the chakra or wheel in another; standing or sitting on a lotus pedestal, or seated in his splendid car with one wheel, drawn by a seven-headed horse of an emerald colour.

“But oh, what pencil of a living star  
 Could paint that gorgeous car,  
 In which, as in an ark supremely bright,  
 The lord of boundless light  
 Ascending, calm o’er the empyrean sails,  
 And with ten thousand beams his awful beauty veils.”

Sir W. Jones’s *Hymn to Surya*.

With the Greeks Helios was the sun. He was the son of Hyperion and Thea, and a brother of Selene and Eos. By Homer he is described as giving light both to gods and men. Rising in the east from Oceanus and traversing the heavens, he descends in the evening into the darkness of the west. This simple notion was greatly embellished by later facts. In the Homeric hymn on Helios he is given a chariot and horses. At a later period, Apollo was identified with Helios, but the identification cannot be carried out. The myth of Apollo was one of those beautiful figments, the pure and unmixed products of the Greek poetic mind. He was the embodiment of the refined intellect and physical beauty of the Greek himself.

With the Peruvian, isolated from every other nation and far removed from any Asiatic or European influence, the sun was the beneficent father of his dynasty of kings, and the Incas were his children. “Our northern natures can hardly comprehend how the sun, the moon, the stars, were imaged on the heart of a Peruvian, and dwelt there; how the changes in these luminaries were combined with all his feelings and his fortunes; how the dawn was hope to him, how the fiery midday brightness was power to him; how the declining sun was death to him; and how the new morning was a resurrection to him; nay more, how the sun, and the moon, and the stars, were his personal friends, as well as his deities; how he held communion with them, and thought that they regarded every act and word; how, in his solitude, he fondly imagined that they sympathised with him, and how, with outstretched arms, he appealed to them against their own unkindness, or against the injustice of his fellow man.”\*

In the rude conceptions of the Scandinavian, Odin, “the one eyed,” “the fire eyed,” who sits on Air-throne, the watch-tower of Asgard, was the sun, who moves in the firmament or air, and oversees all things.

Many, however, of the mythic products of the imaginative age cannot be resolved to a solar origin or be reduced to any single system; for they are the natural offspring of the wild and impetuous feelings and emotions peculiar to that phase.

All tends to prove the indigenous and independent growth of these myths, each race evolving them, according to its peculiar genius and temperament, as the natural and spontaneous offspring of the imaginative mind in its youthful phase.

The Egyptian mind produced stern and gloomy figures; the Hindoo, hideous and fantastic shapes; the Greek, forms of grace and beauty; the Scandinavian terrible and bloodthirsty impersonifications. Thus, the stern and rigid Ra, the fantastic-shaped Surya, the beautiful and

\* Helps’s *Spanish Conquest in America*.

graceful Helios and Apollo, the terrible Odin, were personifications of the same physical sun.

Egypt was an isolated country, shut out from all contact with other nations; its civilisation was strictly self-developed; for we have no record that Egypt learnt anything from any other nation. Egypt was the earliest of nations; for to it we may attribute with every certainty the first steps in civilisation. Egypt had a mythic age, a religious system; Egypt had developed a language and the arts and sciences requisite for the conception and execution of the stupendous monuments and works of art still extant, for many thousand years, when many of the surrounding countries were in a primitive and pastoral state.

In India we see the course of independent development as strongly exemplified; for India, locked in by Indus and the Himalaya, lying far away and apart, where even the faintest echoes of Greece or Europe could never reach her, ran through its solitary cycle, and worked out its development alone. India has a literature of poetry and philosophy, which reaches back to the earliest times, older than Troy and the Iliad, older than the Pentateuch; there were Indian poets before Homer lisped his first song; there were Indian thinkers and philosophers before Thales called water the *αρχη* of all things.

"The literature of Greece," as Colonel Mure observes, "was, in all its branches, a plant of indigenous growth, indebted to no foreign aid for its nurture or improvement." Grecian myths are evidently the pure and undiluted secretions of the Greek mind, and have consequently no connexion with Indian or Egyptian myths; they evince their Hellenic origin, being founded on genuine Hellenic feelings and principles. The beautiful and poetic legends of Greece have nothing in common with the coarse and monstrous fables of India. Lord Lytton confirms this view:—"Grecian mythology cannot be moulded into any of the capricious and fantastic systems of erudite ingenuity: as a whole, no mythology can be considered more strikingly original, because its foundations appear indigenous, and based upon the character and impressions of the people; and because at no one period from the earliest even to the latest date, whatever occasional resemblances may exist, can any identity be established between its most popular and essential creations and those of any other faith."\*

As to Peru, its remoteness and total disconnexion from the rest of the world are sufficient to induce a belief in the certainty of the independent and indigenous growth of its mythology. Humboldt, when remarking on American fictions analogous to those which occur in Europe, observes:—"Thus, in every region of the earth, a resemblance may be traced in the early fictions of nations—those especially which relate to two principles governing the world, the abode of souls after death, the happiness of the virtuous, and the punishment of the guilty. The most different and most barbarous languages present a certain number of images, which are the same, because they have their source in the nature of our intelligence and our sensations. Darkness is everywhere connected with the idea of

\* *Athens: its Rise and Fall.*

death. The Grotto of Caripe is the Tartarus of the Greeks ; and the guacharos which hover over the rivulet, uttering plaintive cries, remind us of the Stygian birds."

Attributing the origin of myths to etymology, to Sanscrit roots, and to a phase of language, is absurd. Language is but the tool of the imaginative and mythopœic mind ; we may as well attribute the wild fancies of the poet to his pen, the life-like forms of the painter to his brush, or the living marble of the sculptor to his chisel. The real originator is the mind in the poetic phase. It has been said that the origin of mythological phraseology is language forgetting itself. Language may forget itself a hundred times, but can never produce anything, unless the imaginative mind impregnates it.

As an instance of the etymological solution, we may give the following:—"It is said by the poet Hesiod, that Uranus (the sky) covers everything ; and that when he brings the night, he is stretched out everywhere, embracing the earth. This sounds almost as if the Greek myth had still preserved a recollection of the etymological power of Uranus ; for Uranos is the Sanskrit Varuna,\* and this is derived from a root *var*, to cover."† Can we conceive that Hesiod had a recollection of the etymological power of Uranos when he gave utterance to this natural poetical expression, flowing from an imaginative mind ? And again, "Daphne is young and beautiful,—Apollo loves her,—she flies before him, and dies as he embraces her with his brilliant rays ;" or, as a poet of the Veda expresses it, "the Dawn comes near to him (the sun) ; she expires as soon as he begins to breathe ; the mighty one irradiates the sky ;" but surely the same eyes to see, the same heart to feel with nature, and the same mind to give expression to his thoughts, were common to the Greek poet as to the imaginative Hindoo ; it was the same simple story of nature which inspired the early poet, whether Greek or Hindoo. Why ascribe the origin of these solar myths to India ? Let us hear what common sense suggests in reply, in the beautiful language of Lord Lytton, "the effects of the sun upon human labour and human enjoyment are so sensible to the simplest understanding, that we cannot wonder to find that glorious luminary among the most popular deities of ancient nations. Why search through the east to account for its worship in Greece ? More easy to suppose that the inhabitants of a land, whom the sun so especially favoured, saw and blest it, for it was good, than, amidst innumerable contradictions and extravagant assumptions, to decide upon that remoter shore, whence was transplanted a deity, whose effects were so benignant, whose worship so natural to the Greeks. And in the more plain belief, we are also borne out by the more sound inductions of learning. For it is noticeable that neither the moon nor the stars—favourite divinities with those who enjoyed the serene nights, or inhabited the broad plains of the east—were honoured with that intense and reverent worship which attended them in Asia and in Egypt. What the stars were to

\* Varuna is the god of the waters, the Indian Neptune, and thus cannot be in any way connected with Uranos (heaven).

† Müller, *Comparative Mythology*.

the east, their own beautiful aurora, awaking them to the delight of their genial and temperate climate, was to the early Greeks.”\*

The crucial test of the Sanscrit etymological system is the mythology of Mexico, Peru, and Central America, into which, however deeply we may dig, we cannot unearth a Sanscrit root, for it was worked out independently, and far removed from Asiatic influence. This system contains many analogous myths with those of India and Greece; yet it is impossible to attribute their origin to Sanscrit roots or the Veda. To what Sanscrit roots shall we trace the Huitzilopotchi, the war-god, who, like the Buddha of the Hindoos, was born of a virgin, and like the Minerva of the Greeks, came into the world all armed; the Quetzalcoatl, the god of air, who, like the Manu of the Hindoos, was the first legislator, and instructed the natives in the arts of government, of the Mexicans; the Pachacamac and Viricocha, names of the deity Chasca (the planet Venus), the youth with the long and flowing locks, the page of the sun; Illapa, thunder and lightning, the sun's dread ministers of the Peruvians; the Famagostäd and Zapaltónal, like the Ouranos and Ge of the Greeks, the heaven and earth of the inhabitants of Central America? With what figment of the Veda shall we connect the Polynesian solar myth of Mani catching the sun in a noose, that he might compel him to move more slowly, in order that mankind may have long days to labour and to procure subsistence for themselves? or are we to attribute it to an Egyptian origin, as we find the Egyptian name Ra in the Polynesian name for the sun, Tama-mu-te-Ra? To what Sanscrit phraseology are we to assign the exquisite and lovely Polynesian myth, in which “Heaven still remains separated from his spouse, the Earth,—yet their mutual love still continues; the soft warm sighs of her loving bosom still ever rise up to him, ascending from the woody mountains and valleys,—and men call these mists; and the vast Heaven, as he mourns through the long nights his separation from his beloved, drops frequent tears upon her bosom,—and men, seeing them, term them dew-drops?” Are we to attribute this to some dim recollection of the etymological power of the Sanscrit root, *prush*, which means “dew”; or rather, as common sense would suggest, to the natural poetical conceptions common to the human mind, and consequently equally evolved by the remote Polynesians?

Ballad poetry, which is an embodiment in verse of myths floating through the popular mind, is also an invariable growth of that stage in the progress of society, which corresponds with the youthful period of the individual man; as Macaulay observes, “it is a species of composition which scarcely ever fails to spring up and flourish in every society at a certain point in the progress towards refinement.” It belongs to the common store of human nature, the outpourings of which, in forms varying according to time and place, are sure to be found in all corners of the world. “All human beings, not utterly savage, long for some information about past times, and are delighted by narratives which present pictures to the eye of the mind.” In the recital of these tales, the language naturally falls into metre and

\* *Athens: its Rise and Fall.*



rhythm. Hence the ballad measure in which they are frequently found. "Tacitus informs us that songs were the only memorials of the past which the ancient Germans possessed. We learn from Lucan and from Ammianus Marcellinus that the brave actions of the ancient Gauls were commemorated in the verses of the bards. During many ages, and through many revolutions, minstrelsy retained its influence over both the Teutonic and Celtic races. The vengeance exacted by the spouse of Attila for the murder of Siegfried was celebrated in rhymes, of which Germany is still justly proud. The exploits of Athelstane were commemorated by the Anglo-Saxons, and those of Canute by the Danes, in rude poems, of which a few fragments have come down to us. The chants of the Welsh harpers preserved, through ages of darkness, a faint and doubtful memory of Arthur. In the Highlands of Scotland may still be gleaned some relics of the old songs about Cuthullin and Fingal. The long struggle of the Suevians against the Ottoman power was recorded in lays full of martial spirit. We learn from Herrera that, when a Peruvian Inca died, men of skill were appointed to celebrate him in verses, which all the people learned by heart, and sang in public on days of festival. The feats of Kurroglou, the great freebooter of Turkistan, recounted in ballads composed by himself, are known in every village of northern Persia. Captain Beecher heard the bards of the Sandwich Islands recite the heroic achievements of Tamehameha, the most illustrious of their kings. Mungo Park found in the heart of Africa a class of singing men, the only annalists of their rude tribes, and heard them tell the story of the victory which Damel, the negro prince of the Jaloffs, won over Abdul Kader, the Mussulman tyrant of Foota Torra."\* Ireland had also her bards, who sung the heroic deeds of her native chiefs, her Conloch, her Cuchullin, and her Fin Mac Cool. In Mexico, the traditions of the country were embodied in the songs and hymns which were carefully taught in the public schools. These were various, embracing the mythic legends of a heroic age, the warlike achievements of their own, or the softer tales of love and pleasure. A New Zealand priest thus terminates his legend of Mani :—"This is narrative about the generations of the ancestors of the inhabitants of New Zealand, and therefore we preserve closely these traditions of old times, as a thing to be taught to the generations that come after us ; so we repeat them in our prayers, and whenever we relate the deeds of the ancestors from whom each family is descended, and upon similar occasions." These analogies and coincidences in the songs, ballads, narratives, and other fictions, in countries so unconnected and far apart, all tend to show that they were independent inventions peculiar to that phase of the social infancy of man, corresponding with the boyhood, or story-loving age, in the individual man. As heroes and heroines, ogres and giants, were the offspring of our youthful imagination, so Arthur and Fingal, Romulus and Remus, Achilles and Ulysses, Conloch and Cuchullin, were products of the imaginative phase of the national mind.

Mr. Grote's observation with regard to the mythic period in Greece,

\* Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome.*

"The curious and imaginative Greek, whenever he did not find a recorded past, was uneasy till he had created one," may be applied to many nations. To this same source we may attribute the fabulous annals and legends of the past in China, Hindostan, Egypt, Greece, Rome, England, Ireland, Peru, and Mexico.

China had her Fohi, who is said to have invented the art of music and numbers, and to have taught his subjects to live in a civilised state, her Yaou, her Shun, and her Yu the Great. India, her Manu, the father of the human race, and the patriarchal ruler and legislator; her kings, who were denominated children of the sun and moon. Egypt her Menes, the founder of Memphis, and her kings, also styled sons of the sun, Sera, son of Ra. Greece, her Pelasgus and the Pelasgi, who introduced agriculture and possessed a considerable knowledge of the useful arts; her Helen, the mythical ancestor of all the Hellenes; her Cadmus and his Phœnicians, who introduced an alphabet, and a higher civilisation.\* Rome her Æneas and his Trojans; her Romulus, and her lawgiver Numa. England her Brutus, a great grandson of Æneas, who founded a dynasty of kings, among whom were Bladud, Lear, Cymbeline. Ireland her Nuad and her Tuatha de Danaans, of superior knowledge and intelligence, and skilled in magic and necromancy; and her Ollam Fodla, her first lawgiver. Mexico her Quetzalcoatl, her great benefactor, who instructed the natives in the use of metals, in agriculture, and in the arts of government. Peru her Manco Capac, and her Mama Oello, who gathered the natives into communities, and taught them the arts of civilised life, and her Incas, the children of the sun, their descendants.

These figments, we repeat again, were all the products of a mythopœic age transferred to a past which never existed, and, at a later period, looked upon as historical. They sprung up independently as offspring of the mythic or imaginative phase of mind, incident to all nations at a certain stage of their development; for we may say with every certainty that five of these nations, China, India, Egypt, Peru, and Mexico, passed through almost identical phases of civilisation, without any mutual influence in these early periods; for there is not a shadow of a fact to prove that there ever was any connexion between these nations in that remote age.

In the earlier middle ages—for the ninth century seems to have been a fallow interval between two cycles of civilisation, marking the close of one cycle and the beginning of another—we find a similar phase of the European mind when it returned to something like the simple faith of primitive times. It accordingly gave birth to a profusion of legends of saints and knights. The same stage of civilisation produced the counterpart of the tales of Heracles and Theseus, of the wanderings of Ulysses, and the Argonautic expedition, in the shape of romances of chivalry. Like the Homeric poems, the romances announced themselves as true narratives, and were, down

\* These civilisers evidently represent a step in the progress of civilisation personified, as Dædalus, in the history of sculpture, represents a phase in its progress.

to the fourteenth century, popularly believed as such. The majority relate to personages probably altogether fictitious ; Amadis and Lancelot we are in nowise called on to believe ; and of King Arthur, as of King Agamemnon, we have no means of ascertaining if he ever really existed or not.

The thanks of the meeting were given to Mr. Westropp.

The Rev. DUNBAR HEATH conceived that the principal idea in the paper was that a myth was identical with personification. Many personifications were mentioned, in which mere abstractions were turned into active agents, who performed various things, and names were given to them. In his opinion a myth was not necessarily connected with personification ; it meant that something was said to have been done which was not, and that kind of myth was not peculiar to any period, nor to any nation. There was a second principle enunciated in the paper, that myths are only to be found at a certain period in the lives of individuals and of nations. Now, in opposition to that idea, examples might be adduced of the existence of myths in times by no means obscure. Several of such myths were to be found in the records of the latest events in history. For instance, he believed it to be untrue that, at the battle of Waterloo, the two celebrated expressions were used, "La garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas," and "Up, Guards, and at 'em !" Both these alleged expressions he believed to be myths. He believed it to be equally mythical that when a French ship was sunk during a certain battle, the men refused to be saved from drowning. There were many myths of that sort even in the records of very modern events. There were, for example, two great battles a few years ago, both of which the French were generally supposed to have won,—the battle of Magenta and the battle of Solferino. The fact, however, was that in the latter the French were driven back four miles during the fight, though the enemy retreated afterwards for political reasons. Again, the story of William Tell was a myth, and it is now doubted whether Joan of Arc was burnt. There were many known myths of that kind in modern times ; and as to mythical personification, that existed extensively at the present day, and was to be found even in many of the sciences. It was not uncommon to consider abstractions as entities and powers, though not in the shape of human beings. In medicine and in theology that practice was especially observable. The principle of vitality, for instance, was credited with certain actions, and that attribute might be considered as much a personification as if it were called Hercules. It was the same with "contractility", to which certain powers were supposed to be attached. So again, in theology, the abstraction "faith" was said to do a great many things ; and it would be found that in the present state and life of nations, myths and personifications existed as in former times. When there was no literature, the pretty myths only were remembered from generation to generation, while the others were forgotten.

Dr. CARTER BLAKE, referring to what had been stated in the paper respecting the myths of Central America, said, that the same myth, varied according to circumstances, was widely diffused in that part of

the American continent. He thought that if they extended their views to the origin of these and of other myths, it might lead to some practical results. In Central America, the sun-god, Helios, Phœbus, or Ra, was the principal deity ; but his attributes were very different among different tribes, and appeared under three aspects. Among the tribes commonly known as Aztecs, the sun-god was supposed to be endowed with certain attributes, which differed from those attributed to him by the tribes who occupied the country that extended eastward to the Atlantic ; and the natives of New Granada, again, supposed the sun-god to be different from either ; nevertheless, they had the same idea that the sun-god was more powerful than any other. He was worshipped by each of those different people three times a-day, at the same hour. By the Chontales Indians he was regarded as a destructive deity, and human sacrifices had, in past times, been offered to him. A hundred miles away, on the other side of Nicaragua, the Aztecs, Diris, and NAGRANDANS had a sun-god with entirely different attributes. With them he was associated with the generative powers of nature, of which the egg and the serpent were symbols (not, however, the ox, as that was only introduced into America in the sixteenth century). In the south, as, *e. g.*, amongst the Muyscas, there was the same sun-god ; but so far from being destructive and generative, he was associated with physical forces. Among other actions attributed to him, he was supposed to be the cause of earthquakes, which were imagined by the people to be produced by shifting the pillars that supported the earth from one side to the other. It would thus be seen that there existed in three places, at considerable distances apart, a belief in the same deity, to whom entirely different attributes were supposed to belong ; the powers he was conceived to possess being variously associated with the products and circumstances of the country in different parts of Central America. As to India, it was a remarkable fact that the oldest myth of Buddha represented him as a deity different in appearance from any Indian tribes. He was represented as a pure Negro, with crisp curly hair, prognathous muzzle, and with all the other characters of the Negro, though there was no evidence of any Negro race having existed in India. There were Negroids of several varieties, but so far as is known, the true Negro race never did exist in India ; yet the old Indian myth pointed to the Negro type as having there existed. In the extreme west of the Old World, the traditional inhabitants were often identified with the devil. The NUTONS, who crept into caves to dwell, who were of diminutive stature, and whose characters differed from those of the Aryan races, were supposed to be a kind of devils. The remains of that race were found in the bone-caves of Belgium, and the myth associated with them was that they were supernatural beings. It would appear, therefore, that in Central America the myths were governed by the geographical conditions of the country ; and that in the east they were associated with the primitive inhabitants of the soil.

The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Westropp, in his paper, appeared to consider that the uniformity of mythical belief in different parts of

the world showed the intellectual identity of the human species, and he was inclined to think that he had made out a good case, and had thrown considerable light on anthropology. The author of the paper had carried the inquiry beyond the so-called Aryan field into distant nations, and even to America. He had thus raised an important question. He had shown that comparative mythology was founded on wider principles than those for which Max Müller, Adalbert Kuhn, and Mr. G. W. Cox, contended; viz., on the identity of man's intellect in all parts of the world, and to a great extent he had made out his case. But they ought not, at the same time, to forget the debt they owed to the philologists; for their investigations had led the way to those more extended generalisations. The philologists had shown that the Hindoo, the Greek, the Latin, and the Persian mythologies were allied, and they had found it out by the identity of language. Mr. Westropp, on the other hand, showed a more extended affinity, and said that the identity of the mythology of distant nations could not be connected with language; for when there was no affinity in the language of distant nations, they agreed in their mythology. There could be no doubt that the worship of natural objects prevailed in all nations speaking Aryan languages; and there could also be no doubt that the study of the languages had led to the discovery. The chairman then pointed out several affinities in the Aryan languages from which the origin of many myths had been discovered, and that discovery he considered the most important which philologists had made. He believed, however, that the author of the paper was correct in stating that the same mythological ideas had sprung up, independently, in different nations; and though philologists had shown the connection of different myths by language, they had not developed the science of mythology to its full extent. He said he was much pleased with the remarks of Mr. Heath as to the modern prevalence of the tendency to personification, which he considered to be fraught with the greatest danger to scientific inquiry. As regards the identity of mythology of different nations, he thought great light had been thrown on the subject by Dr. Blake, in his observations respecting the different ways in which the same phenomena are regarded in different parts of the world. He thought that Mr. Westropp had done great service by bringing before the Society the facts mentioned in his paper; and he had shown that they ought not to take the researches of the philologists as final.

The chairman then said he was glad to have to tell the meeting that they had among them that evening the distinguished Secretary of the Anthropological Society of Spain, Dr. Delgado Jugo, who had come to hear their proceedings. No doubt many of the Fellows were acquainted with his introductory address to the Anthropological Society at Madrid, for the presentation of some copies of which they had already voted their thanks that evening. That Society had been in existence some time; and the anthropology of Spain possessed especial interest in this country, as it was thought by many that the original people of some of the Spanish provinces were connected with the first inhabitants of Britain. The Spanish anthropologists were

getting on very well ; and, in the introductory address of Dr. Delgado Jugo, much had already been done towards discovering the ancestry of the races that now exist in Spain. The chairman, addressing Dr. Delgado Jugo in French, welcomed him, in the name of the Society, communicated to him their satisfaction at the honour of a visit from him, and informed him of the vote of thanks which had already been given for the copies of the Introductory Address presented by him.

Dr. DELGADO JUGO then briefly addressed the meeting, speaking in French. He expressed the desire of the Anthropological Society of Spain to do all they could to promote the science in conjunction with the Anthropological Societies of England and France. He said that there were great differences in the races that inhabit different provinces in Spain, and it was one of the principal objects of the Anthropological Society of Madrid to ascertain, in conjunction with the Anthropological Societies of England and France, which was the first race who peopled Spain ; that question had a bearing also on the question of the origin of the people of this island. He stated that the Madrid Society had recently sent a collection of Basque skulls to the Anthropological Society of Paris, and they were forming a similar collection to be sent to the Society in London.

The following paper on "Aboriginal Ovens," contributed by Peter Beveridge, Esq., and communicated by Sir Charles Nicholson, Bart., F.A.S.L., was then read :—

After the author had stated the results of his experience in Australia, and especially said that he had seen blackfellows' ovens in every stage of progression, from the moment of the first "yam-stick" being dug into the earth, up to the largest and most complete one extant, he proceeded : My observations of this subject extend over a period of twenty-eight years, and having always taken great interest in things aboriginal, I have not any hesitation in saying (even although it may savour of egotism) that the following description is correct in every particular.

Blackfellows' ovens are not by any means misnomers, as the mounds so called are essentially "cooking places", and they are formed in the following manner :—A family, or (as the case may be) several families, who have taken up their quarters where food chances to be plentiful, have something to cook,—for example, I will say an emu ; a hole is therefore dug, about three feet in diameter, and about eight or ten inches in depth ; this work is always performed by "Lubras", and their only implements are "yam-sticks." If there are not any stones in the vicinity, the most tenacious pieces of earth found during the excavation are carefully put aside. When the hole has attained the desired depth, it is filled with firewood, upon which the selected pieces of earth are placed, the wood is then ignited, and, by the time it is all consumed, the earth nodules have become baked into the consistency of brick, and as a matter of course are red hot. When this result has been achieved, the hot clay is removed by a pair of "aboriginal tongs", after which the hole is carefully swept out, and a layer of damp grass placed over the bottom and round the sides ; the dismembered emu is then packed carefully on the grass, when it is covered over with more moist grass ; the red hot clay is then spread